

BENSON TECH ALUMNI TEXT



The Official Newsletter of the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association
April 2009—Tech Show Edition

New Sustainable Benson Vision Advances

The Benson Alumni Association continues to find supporters and to promote its New Benson Vision. Quickly summarized the Vision is a 4-year school with a comprehensive academic program coupled with technical courses tied to the emerging Green Economy. Additionally, the school would be partnered with businesses, civic organizations, and advanced schools and colleges that might offer financial support to the school's programs, hands-on training, and employment opportunities. Such a combination is expected to increase students' interest and motivation as well as prepare students for further education in technical fields, or upon graduation to be workplace-ready in a society valuing Sustainability.

The New Benson Vision builds upon Benson's existing legacy, facility and central location by enhancing and expanding established technical programs with new technical skills for alternative energy, sustainable building industries, etc. Building on Benson's existing programs is less expensive than creating a new technical program elsewhere in the city. In addition, the Vision recognizes the historic strength of Benson's four-year curriculum in which 9th-10th graders engage in "career exploration by taking a variety of technical "hands on" classes before focusing in a particular technical area for "career preparation" during their 11th-12th years; an approach that is not possible in a 2 year "skill center".

Since the Association's February 11th participatory presentation of the New Benson Vision, there have been numerous meetings and briefings with local educators, business leaders and government officials. The meetings have confirmed that (1) as the economy recovers there will be a growing number of jobs both for high school graduates with technical skills and for graduates from community and 4-year colleges with technical degrees, (2) success in college is improved by the acquisition of some technical skills in high school, and (3) a high school experience combining typical HS academic classes, technical courses, and an array of athletics, arts, and extra-curricular opportunities creates well-rounded graduates who have a greater ability to succeed in the 21st century society.

The Association has been invited to participate in a April 20th meeting of "school groups with District planning people to comment on PPS's "Three Big Ideas" at which time it will support the Neighborhood High Schools-Magnet School model. It appears to be the best framework for Benson as a strong 4-year comprehensive-technical high school.

Anyone interested in participating in the further development and advancement of the Vision – or are interested in exploring how to be a "partner" – is urged to contact the Association.

Benson's Future May Be At Your Fingertips

The fingers on your computer's keyboard may affect Benson's future. The Portland Public School District is looking for public input concerning its *Three Big Ideas* that will shape the future of Benson and Portland's other high schools for the next 20-years. At stake is whether Benson will be closed, turned into a 2-year skills center, or remain a 4-year comprehensive technical school. Your views and thoughts about the *Three Big Ideas* should be sent to highschools@pps.k12.or.us. Two public meetings have been scheduled for April 29th, 6:30 to 9pm at Franklin HS and May 2nd, 9:30-Noon at Madison HS.

The *Three Big Ideas* are PPS's latest step in their comprehensive review process of its 10 high schools. In a nutshell the three ideas are as follows: (1) Special Focus Campuses (students would go to their neighborhood high school each of which would offer a variety of regular and special HS course options), (2) Neighborhood-Magnet School (students could choose between their neighborhood HS or a magnet school like Benson that would offer

special courses), and (3) Regional Flex Network (the city would be divided into regions each of which would have a mix of big and small schools offering a variety of high school courses). More details on these ideas are available on the PPS website cited above.

As one can quickly see, the Neighborhood-Magnet School option provides the best hope for Benson's future as a 4-year high school. Even then, Benson might be downsized into a two-year skill center equivalent. So, your comments are important!

If you care about Benson's future, the Alumni Association urges you to contact the District no later than May 15th. Of course, we would like you to support ideas from The New Benson Vision, but your own thoughts are valuable too. The District will use these comments to finalize its plan for Benson and the other district high schools by the first of June. So, there is no time to waste.

Your BPHSAA Board of Directors

Beginning in August of 2008, a group of 12-dedicated individuals reinstated the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA). They have spent countless hours locating alumni, organizing events, fundraising, establishing a website, and developing possible long term strategies for the school's future.

Dale Bajema—Class of 1954

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Long Term Development Committee Member and Benson Site Council Member

Major: *Mechanical Drafting*

Current Occupation: *Retired after 37-years with the US Department of Interiors.*

Favorite Benson Moment: *Camaraderie with football teammates.*

Josh Piper—Class of 1995

Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors, Chairman of the Communications Committee and Website Master Extraordinaire

Major: *Mechanical Drafting*

Current Occupation: *Web Developer*

Favorite Benson Moment: *California Tour by the Orange Blues Jazz Ensemble where we played gigs at Fisherman's Wharf, Cal Berkeley & a jazz festival.*

Tammy Hite (Miller)—Class of 1991

Secretary of the Board of Directors, Co-Chair of the Events Committee, and LTDC Member

Major: *Architectural Drafting*

Current Occupation: *Architectural Intern*

Favorite Benson Moment: *A 45-minute duct tape ball fight in the auditorium with the BATS on my last day as a Benson teacher in June 2007. Believe it or not, we actually found all 80 of them afterwards.*

Paul Benninghoff—Class of 1957

Treasurer of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Finance Committee

Major: *Mechanical Drafting*

Current Occupation: *Retired from PPS and Former Benson Principal*

Favorite Benson Moment: *Being selected as a Rose Festival Driver*

Kyle Andersen—Class of 1986

Long Term Development Committee Member

Major: *Architectural Drafting*

Current Occupation: *Associate Principal Architect / Designer*

Favorite Benson Moment: *Riding my bike to and from school for daily doubles for Varsity Soccer with Coach Robin Hill.*

Ken Bakke—Class of 1959

Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee

Major: *Carpentry*

Current Occupation: *Retired*

Favorite Benson Moment: *It's just too embarrassing to share.*

Neal Galash—Class of 1958

Co-Chair of the Events Committee

Major: *Pre-Engineering*

Current Occupation: *Retired from the Assessor's Office at Multnomah County*

Favorite Benson Moment: *Graduation. Need I say more.*

Charles Heil—Class of 1956

Long Term Development Committee Member

Major: *Radio*

Occupation: *Retired Physics Teacher/Television and Radio Engineer*

Favorite Benson Moment: *So many! Taking three different girls to three different senior proms. I was broke but happy!*

Bob Hyland—Class of 1950

Scholarship Committee

Major: *Automotive*

Current Occupation: *Retired*

Favorite Benson Moment: *Knowing people in the Autobody major that could fix my father's car in a hurry after I took it for a joyride while he was out of town.*

Don LeBarre—Class of 1950

Chairman of the Scholarship Committee

Major: *Automotive*

Current Occupation: *Retired*

Favorite Benson Moment: *That is for me to know.*

Richard (Dick) Spies—Class of 1964

Chairman of the Long Term Development Committee

Major: *Architectural Drafting*

Occupation: *Architect*

Favorite Benson Moment: *The challenge of completing a watercolor painting in 15-minutes in my major when I just thought I had to draft well.*

Joanne Stainbrook—Class of 1992

Long Term Development Committee Member

Major: *Architectural Drafting*

Occupation: *Architect*

Favorite Benson Moment: *My biology science experiment working with double headed planaria.*



Benson Campus Clean-Up Day

On Saturday, April 18th, a group of Benson Alumni and Friends showed their school spirit and pride by braving the elements to prepare the front of the school for the coming Tech Show. OK, the elements actually cooperated so there wasn't much of a sacrifice made in that regard unless you count a little sunburn, however, the volunteers did spend over 4-hours pruning hedges, raking flower beds, pulling weeds and picking up garbage.

The group consisted of alumni spanning from five decades, a future alumnus from the class of 2010 and his supportive parents.

Thank you to everyone who participated!

Thank You to Our Volunteers

The BPSHAA would like to thank the following people for generously volunteering their time to help us with our efforts to locate fellow alumni, rally support for Benson, or assist at our events.

Ed Warmouth—Class of 1945
 Franklin Johnson—Class of 1964
 Fred Wong—Class of 1971 & Current Benson Teacher
 Ben Fleskes—Class of 1986
 Tiffany Miller—Class of 1993
 Suzanne Stainbrook—Class of 1994
 Heather Hewlett—Class of 2006
 Cathy Skach—Current Benson Teacher
 Benson Chapter of SkillsUSA
 Benson Auditorium Technical Staff

Benson Trivia

Did you know that there are currently 10-Benson alumni teaching at the school today in a variety of different subjects and several others serve as coaches for the sports teams and extra-curricular activities?

BPHSAA—Committees

The BPHSAA offers several different opportunities to support Benson High School and the Alumni Association through its various committees.

Anyone is welcomed to participate. Time commitments vary. If you would like to serve on any of the committees, please contact the BPHSAA.

Membership Committee: The committee is responsible for the recruitment of new members and maintaining current membership for the alumni association.

Communications Committee: The committee is responsible for communications with Alumni Association members including maintaining an internet website as well as printed newsletters, flyers, etc as needed for special purposes.

Scholarship Committee: The committee is responsible for the management of the Benson Polytechnic High School Reunion Scholarship Fund (a tax exempt fund) that was established in 1991. This includes raising and investing funds and overseeing the award of annual scholarships to graduating Benson seniors.

Finance Committee: The committee is responsible for developing and reviewing fiscal procedures, a fundraising plan, and annual budget.

Events Committee: The committee is responsible for planning and organizing alumni events such as the Alumni Room at Tech Show and the Annual All-Class Reunion Picnic.

Long Term Development Committee: The LTDC is responsible for developing a long term vision for the future of Benson Polytechnic High School.



Join Us...

Sunday, August 16, 2009

**3rd Annual
All Benson Alumni
Reunion Picnic**

Where: *Columbia Park, Area 'D'*
Located in North Portland off of N. Lombard

When: *11:00 am to 4:00pm*

- ◆ Bring your own food and beverages.
- ◆ Tri-Met bus routes 44 & 75 serve the area and on-street parking is available.
- ◆ Current and retired faculty have been invited to attend.
- ◆ Hosted by the Benson Polytechnic High School Alumni Association (BPHSAA)

3rd Annual All Alumni Picnic Planned

The 3rd Annual All Class Reunion Picnic will be held on Sunday, August 16th from 11AM to 4PM at Columbia Park. Anyone who ever attended Benson is invited as well as all current and past teachers and staff. Parking is limited on the surrounding neighborhood streets, but several Tri-met bus lines serve the area.

We are continuing a tradition begun 2-years ago by the Reunion Scholarship Committee but are adding a new tradition of including the Association's annual meeting. The annual meeting will include the election of board members to fill vacant and expiring members' positions.

Anyone interested in becoming a board member should notify the BPHSAA. All of the names collected will be placed on the ballot. All regular and paid members of the Association are eligible to vote.

Come early and stay late. Bring a picnic lunch or get together with a group of your classmates and plan a potluck. Join your classmates and meet other Benson graduates and supporters.

Contacting the BPHSAA

BPHSAA c/o Benson High School
546 NE 12th Ave. Portland, OR 97232

Website: www.BensonTechAlumni.org
Email: Info@BensonTechAlumni.org

Scholarships to be Awarded in June

Two or more scholarships totaling \$3600 will be awarded to Benson's 2009 graduates from the Reunion Scholarship Fund. These will add to the 41 scholarships previously given from the fund since it was established in 1991 by the Classes of 1939, 1940 and 1941. In keeping with Benson's polytechnic orientation the scholarships are awarded to seniors planning to attend technical or community colleges.

Money for the scholarships comes from the annual earnings of the Reunion Scholarship Funds that invested through the Oregon Community Fund. The Fund's "principal" was enhanced by over \$3400 from the 2008-9 winter fund raising effort. While the Oregon Community Fund has suffered like many during the recent economic downturn, the Reunion Scholarship Fund's investment will still allow the 2009 scholarships to be made from current earnings without dipping into the principal.

The 2008-9 fund raising effort was especially enhanced by a generous donation from the Class of 1958 following their 50th reunion. The Alumni Association, created in 2008 and now provides an organizational home for the Reunion Scholarship Fund, extends its grateful appreciation for the gift. Additional information about the Fund, or how to make tax-exempt donations to the Fund, go to www.BensonTechAlumni.org (where donations can be made with a debit or credit card).

Alumni Website: Now Accepting Dues Online

In an effort to make the hassle of paying dues as painless as possible, the BPHSAA website now allows users to pay online. In celebration of Tech Show 2009 and to kick off this new feature, users will find that we have reduced our 2009 dues to \$10.

Users who have logged into the site will find a new tab labeled "Dues" in the middle of the page. Click on the tab and then on the "Donate" button. You will then be taken to PayPal.com, a popular 3rd party payment processor with an impeccable track record for security. PayPal will handle the entire transaction and then return you to the BPHSAA site when finished.

We hope to use this donation medium to allow users to donate towards special gifts to the school and to support programs such as the recently award-winning robotics team. Please keep in mind that donations to the BPHSAA are tax deductible.